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SOVIET UNION - EASTERN EUROPE



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CSCE: Back to the Basics

(The Soviets have issued an authoritative interpretation of CSCE that, not surprisingly, returns to concepts they stressed in the Geneva negotiations.

1 2 3 In an article in *Pravda* on August 20, the Soviets pay lip service to the idea that the ten agreed principles of interstate relations are equal, but they give special attention to the principle of inviolability of frontiers. *Pravda* disputes claims that the principle, which was a central Soviet objective during the negotiations, benefits the East more than the West, arguing that it is vital for all the nations of Europe.

1 3 The article gives low priority to conference provisions concerning human contacts. It seems to imply that improvements in these areas will result from, rather than advance, detente. During the negotiations the Soviets were unable to get wording to this effect incorporated in the conference document. The article also observes that cooperation in the field of human contacts must be subject to the "laws and traditions of each state"--another formulation the Soviets tried, but failed, to have inserted in the final text.

3 A major purpose of the article seems to be to disabuse the domestic audience of any notion that publication of the full text of the conference document in *Pravda* and assertions by Brezhnev and others that Moscow would fulfill its conference obligations means that the conference will lead to meaningful change in their daily lives.

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Polish Commentary on Accords with
West Germany: Ineptitude or Conspiracy?

Recent Polish press commentaries distorting the accords that party First Secretary Gierek and West German Chancellor Schmidt reached in Helsinki will provide fuel for those West Germans who oppose the agreement. Bonn is seeking clarifications and if not satisfied is likely to delay signing the agreement as scheduled in October. If the agreements are not implemented, Gierek will lose not only considerable personal prestige at home but also a large amount of badly needed West German hard currency. Moreover, unless Gierek is able quickly to correct the impressions left by the commentaries, serious questions will be raised about his strength within the leadership.

The commentaries, described by a Polish Foreign Ministry official as "incorrect," are puzzling because for two weeks the Polish press had made no mention of the accords. Unofficially, the Poles explained that they did not want to jeopardize ratification in Bonn.

After Bonn insisted that Polish reticence was hurting hopes for ratification, Warsaw began to dribble out the details. The commentaries and official explanations have, however, further perturbed West German diplomats, because they have raised issues that Bonn thought had been resolved.

Karol Malcuzyński, a well-known and reportedly influential writer, on August 19 was the author of the most controversial commentary. Writing in *Trybuna Ludu*, the party daily, he implied that the Poles do not view the accords as a full settlement of all their wartime claims. Although he added that the agreement was a "compromise," thus suggesting that the Poles had given up certain claims, the fact that he raised the issue at all suggests to the Germans that additional Polish demands may be forthcoming.

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The Schmidt government firmly believes--and must be able to convince parliament--that both sides recognize that these accords are the final settlement of all wartime claims.

The West German embassy immediately asked the Polish Foreign Ministry for clarification of Malczynski's article. A deputy foreign minister claimed that the inaccuracies occurred because many high party and government officials were on vacation. He promised that the false impressions would be quickly corrected.

We concur with the US embassy's opinion that the Pole's remarks are a very weak excuse. If Polish journalists in fact received poor guidance, we should see corrections within the next week. If clarification is not quickly forthcoming, it will suggest that there are elements in the Polish leadership who want to embarrass Gierek--and who have enough clout to get away with it.

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Prague Protests Violations
of Czechoslovak Airspace

Prague has formally protested violations of Czechoslovak airspace on August 15 and 17 by helicopter pilot Barry Meeker, who allegedly brought out a total of seven East German refugees on his two flights.

On August 19, Deputy Foreign Minister Spacil delivered to the West German charge a "firm protest" against the "flagrant violation" of the Czechoslovak border by the helicopter that had taken off from and returned to West Germany. Spacil also spoke to the Austrian ambassador. In this case, however, the ambassador was simply told that Prague was calling for an emergency session of the Czechoslovak-Austrian border commission that had been formed to examine such incidents. The ambassador described his conversation as "low key."

Although Prague has thus far chosen to exercise considerable restraint, its protests and media coverage have set the stage for a more angry reaction should circumstances warrant. Prague radio has already denounced the flights as "criminal actions" and commented that just as the world is welcoming the results of the Helsinki summit, "one can only express profound indignation and concern at such international banditry."

Prague could be preparing to use this incident as a pretext for continuing its internal repression of dissidents and also for dragging its feet in implementing expanded East-West contacts provided for in "Basket Three." By publicizing the fact that security police are interrogating one of the two escapees who was left behind, the regime may be preparing the Czech public for a new round of denunciations of the enemies of détente.

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